

~~SECRET~~

CS Historical Paper

No. 52

CLANDESTINE SERVICES HISTORY

(TITLE OF PAPER)

THE SECRET WAR IN KOREA

(PERIOD)

June 1950 to June 1952

DO NOT DESTROY

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

6 JUN 1997

Date published: 17 July 1968

Copy No. 2 of 3

Controlled by : FE Division

Date prepared : March 1964

Written by : [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53
HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]
Doc. # 4 ; page 1 of 16pp.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

access to North Korea in the last year of the war.

Air Operations

For the first ten months of the war, CIA used U.S. Far East Air Force (FEAF) aircraft to drop agents and materiel into North Korea. CIA first began dropping agents in the twelfth week of the war. A detachment of the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron eventually redesignated as Flight "B" of the Fifth Air Force provided most of the support. FEAF also provided photo intelligence support to Agency operations.

U.S. Army unconventional warfare air operations began when an airborne ranger first lieutenant with the Theater Intelligence Liaison Group in Korea asked an Air Force captain to drop some G-2 (Army Intelligence) agents into North Korea. That flight was the genesis of Flight "B" which made hundreds of C-47 night flights over North Korea in the first two years of the war. Despite frequent adverse weather conditons and fog in the valleys, there were a minimum of abortive flights. The Flight "B" aircrews always did a fine job and with no loss of aircraft. One pilot made more than 108 night flights over North Korea, dropping agents, propaganda leaflets, and supplies.

When the enemy retaliated against CIA guerrillas in the winter of 1951-1952, drop zones and drop times had to be laid on and changed on short notice. Simultaneously the Air Force

19

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53

HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]

Doc. # 4; page 3 of 16 pp.~~SECRET~~

increased its air support to the more vital conventional warfare making aircraft difficult to get. A civilian Cessna and a Beechcraft C-45 were obtained by the Agency. Two of the best pilots were transferred to CIA from Flight "B". Cargo aircraft from a CIA-controlled civilian airline were used to support the guerrilla forces. The U.S. Air Force-CIA relationship throughout the war was particularly profitable, close, and cordial.

Eighth United States Army Korea (EUSAK) Guerrillas

In early 1951, CIA and the G-3 Eighth United States Army Korea (EUSAK), working in harmony, divided North Korea into two parts for guerrilla warfare action and control. The Agency already had established the nucleus for a trained guerrilla movement in the mountains in the extreme northeast. The Army took the western portion where a spontaneous pro-U.N. guerrilla movement developed after the U.N. offensive crossed the 38th parallel on 7 October 1950. By October 1951 the G-3 EUSAK program had about 8,000 guerrillas on the west coast above the 38th parallel organized into sixteen units of varying capabilities depending on how they were recruited and their state of training. However, no safe bases were established on the flat, muddy mainland estuaries and indentations as the effort was dependent upon island bases lying off the west coast, protected by the

20

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53

~~SECRET~~

HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]

Doc. # 4; page 2 of 16 pp.

~~S E C R E T~~

U.S. Navy which controlled the sea. This failure to establish secure bases on the coastal mainland was disastrous. During the Panmunjom Truce Talks in the winter of 1951-1952, the Communists mopped up the area. [REDACTED] CIA advisors worked with the EUSAK west coast guerrillas from January to April 1952. Competition between the CIA and Army guerrilla warfare efforts was keen but wholesome, with no real problems at the operating level. The over-all CIA/Army relationship at that level was eminently satisfactory and mutually advantageous.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE (FI)

In the early stages of the war, there was confusion in the field of intelligence collection. Military units were not prepared for the Communist invasion and, consequently, had no plans for collecting tactical intelligence in the event of war. Budgets had been slashed, and trained personnel were not available. General Willoughby, G-2 of the Far East Command, asked CIA to step into this tactical intelligence gap from which there was no pulling out until the war was terminated.

An Early Air Infiltration

One of the first missions assigned to the Agency was the placement of [REDACTED] teams in [REDACTED] separate areas along the northern border of North Korea. The objectives were to

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53

21

HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]

Doc. # 4; page 5 of 16pp.

~~S E C R E T~~

~~SECRET~~

establish observation posts in mountainous areas overlooking railroad lines, ports, and major highways used by the North Korean Army, and to give early warning of support by Chinese Communists or Soviets. After ten weeks of training [redacted] teams were dropped close to their target areas from a Far East Air Force B-17. [redacted] of the [redacted] teams came on the air with their radios, but within four days reported that they were detected and on the run. Of the [redacted] men dropped over a period of ten months, [redacted] were returned to CIA after working their way back to U.S. Army or U.S. Marine Divisions. The operation demonstrated that properly motivated and trained Korean agents could survive in the North and produce results if they could be put in place without being detected.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

Support to Inchon Landings

In early August 1950 at the time of the Pusan Perimeter, Colonel William Quinn, ^{6/} who had served with the Central Intelligence Group, was a member of the Task Force then preparing to land at Inchon on 15 September 1950. Colonel Quinn and the OSO (CIA Intelligence) Chief [redacted] planned the placing of [redacted] CIA case officers on an island off Inchon harbor to collect pre-invasion intelligence. The case officers used a simple control technique. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

22

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53

HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]

Doc. # 4; page 4 of 16 pp.~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

[REDACTED]

The intelligence produced supported General MacArthur's decision to proceed with the Inchon Landings despite active opposition of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Thus, CIA made a small contribution to the most brilliant tactical stroke of the Korean War.

Armed Reconnaissance of North Korean Coast

In the late summer of 1950, an armed CIA-Korean reconnaissance team began making regular night landings on the enemy east coast. The team operating from a U.S. destroyer took Brigadier General Crawford F. Sams, the Surgeon General of the Far East Command, into an enemy fishing village at night; outposted the area, made contact with the village chiefs, and returned the Surgeon General to the destroyer. The General's foray into the village was to counter Communist claims that the U.S. was engaged in germ warfare and earned General Sams the Distinguished Service Cross for his part in the night's operations.

23

~~SECRET~~

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53
HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]
Doc. # 4; page 16 of 16 pp.

~~SECRET~~

Arms and Munitions: In 1951, enemy weapons and ammunition were issued to CIA guerrillas from a captured weapons dump near Pusan. CIA armed guerrillas with light U.S. infantry weapons: M-1 rifles, tommyguns, carbines, BARs, .30 caliber light machine guns, 2.36 rocket launchers (bazookas) and no weapon heavier than the 81 mm mortar.

Support - A Two-Way Street: Sensible two-way support arrangements evolved through necessity and cooperation. In the tenth week of the war, CIA was given [REDACTED] parachutes by the Far East Air Force to drop [REDACTED] agent teams along the Manchurian-Soviet border of North Korea. In 1951 agents of the Army Far East Command Liaison Group were dropped with CIA parachutes when all military airborne materiel in the theater was frozen for use by the 187th Parachute Infantry. No reimbursement was required in either case. The unconventional warfare operators were "poor relations" compared to the conventional forces; consequently, they helped each other in every way they could.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

The predecessor to the present CIA roller conveyor air cargo drop system was developed by an Air Force officer assigned to the Agency Mission in Korea. Concerned with the time delays civilian parachute dispatch officers took to get cargo out over the drop zone, he borrowed some roller conveyor rails from an Air Force storage warehouse and made an

55

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53

HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]

Doc. # 4 ; page 7 of 16pp.~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

effective and faster exit mechanism. CIA provided small gold bars [REDACTED] to the Far East Air Force (FEAF) for Escape and Evasion kits. CIA declined as unnecessary a FEAF reimbursement offer. U.S. radios of that day were too bulky and heavy for guerrilla warfare. CIA contacted the [REDACTED] electronics industry and had a smaller, lighter radio placed in production. Sets were given to the Armed Forces for their agent operations.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

Agent Authentication

A major problem was that of trying to keep up with North Korean changes in document control. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In North Korea, CIA and military agents collected travel control, identity, and ration documents which were then sent [REDACTED] for reproduction. Another major source for authentication material was the Advanced Allied Translator and Interpreter Section in Korea.

1.5(c)(d)
3.4(b)(1)(6)

Finances

The Mission finance officer from November 1951 to July 1952, recalls that the Agency was funded in cash in an amount of approximately [REDACTED] U.S. dollars per month or [REDACTED] annually. With few exceptions, funds were converted to Korean currency ("won") through an Army Disbursing

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

56

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53
HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]
Doc. # 4; page 6 of 16 pp.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

authority to do whatever was necessary to see that the covert and clandestine activities of all American units in Korea were coordinated. [REDACTED] in November 1951 after exploratory discussions with the Acting CIA Representative, FEC, G-2 EUSAK, other CIA officers in [REDACTED] Korea, the Far East Air Force and the 7th Fleet, the Theater G-2 section arbitrarily acted to achieve G-2's stated and intended purposes. G-2 clearly understood General Walter Bedell Smith's position that CIA being placed under the Far East Theater Commander was predicated on Army assurance it would turn back clandestine and covert activities to the Agency as soon as combat ceased. "Peace talks" were resumed at Panmunjom on 27 November 1951 and the "cease fire" line was agreed upon. For the first time since the war began it appeared that an end to the fighting was in sight. On 28 November 1951 a FECOM order created a new organization by giving FEC/LD the euphonious short title: CCRAK.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

FEC/LD, the Theater G-2 detachment in Korea, responded by placing a sign in ten-inch letters in front of their office in Seoul announcing FEC/LD was the American Headquarters for "COVERT, CLANDESTINE, AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, KOREA." Astounded CIA staffers in Korea appreciating the humor^{19/} of the situation, helped their old friend the FEC/LD Commander, now the new Commander CCRAK, to improvise the euphemistic

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

title "Combined Command Reconnaissance Activities Korea." With the issuance of the 28 November FECOM order, the Chief, CIA Mission Korea became Deputy Commander of CCRAK in addition to his CIA duties. CIA personnel in Korea pitched in and tried to make CCRAK work as they were much too busy with operations to have the time or inclination to fight the command problem. With MacArthur's G-2 gone, the CIA Chiefs [REDACTED] while skeptically remembering that not long ago General Willoughby put CIA activities under surveillance [REDACTED] [REDACTED] cautiously agreed not to fight "city hall."

The Effect of CCRAK

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

On 6 March 1952 the Acting Senior CIA Representative [REDACTED] reviewed CCRAK activities for CIA Headquarters. The dispatch attached, described what it terms a shocking desire for control -- theater staff officers' attempts to circumvent the Acting Senior CIA Representative/FEC at theater level and unwarranted attempts to gain operational information not needed by a non-operating agency. The dispatch also said CIA officers in Korea held the firm belief that General Ridgway, the FE Commander; General Van Fleet, Commander EUSAK; General Everest, FEAF Commander; and Admiral Martin, Commanding the 7th Fleet, were all of the opinion that CIA could best render support to the Theater Commander by attempting to carry out its own national missions rather than by becoming a

75

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53

HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]

Doc. # 4; page 9 of 16 pp.~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

low-level tactical organization. The long and detailed dispatch is of special interest in the light of present day CIA relations with the JCS/Special Assistant for Counter-insurgency and Special Activities (JCS/SACSA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the increasing involvement of CIA in joint covert activities with the Armed Forces.

The effect of CCRAK's creation was stronger G-2 control over CIA, weighting the Agency with demands for direct tactical support of G-2, thereby proliferating CIA's long-term strategic responsibilities with local low-level order-of-battle type tasks. These tasks inevitably diverted the small CIA Mission from its primary job of getting high-level strategic information [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and from making a concentrated effort to establish viable covert action cells in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] North Korea. The diversion of long-range assets to tactical operations exposed agents and operations not only to the enemy but to the local population and to many United Nations agencies as well.

The centralized coordinating mechanism adopted in Korea was ill advised. As the Agency on-duty strength increased after June 1951, more man-hours were devoted to lateral liaison than had been previously possible. When CCRAK was formalized in November 1951, CIA had good working relations

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53

HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]

Doc. # 4; page 10 of 16pp.

76

~~SECRET~~1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

~~SECRET~~

with all the senior U.S. military commanders in Korea. Liaison was also maintained with their subordinate units where there was a need for mutual cooperation, support, or special services. Most important, a feeling of mutual trust and understanding had grown up among the individuals of the various subordinate units engaged in clandestine and covert operations in Korea.

Additionally, the CCRAK organization with unquestioned over-control of CIA activities as of June 1952 still had not unraveled the more vexing problem of coordinating agent activities. There were the problems of false confirmation of reports caused by lateral contacts between Korean agents, of fabricators, and of double agents. Penetrations of U.S. and foreign intelligence services did not get the prompt damage assessments required to bring them quickly under control. In fairness to CCRAK officers, the CIA Mission Korea admittedly complicated the agent coordinating issue by refusing to reveal identities of sensitive agents. This was done because CIA is required by law to protect its sources, and the Korean Mission had been directed by its Washington Headquarters to preserve its assets for the long haul regardless of the outcome of the war.

The lack of coordination of agent activities was most noticeable in the U.S. counterintelligence effort against the

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

mammoth Communist covert action machine. Yet, G-2 EUSAK would not permit the Eighth Army Counterintelligence Corps to be placed under joint CCRAK coordination. Clearly, CCRAK was sauce to cook the CIA goose. It was not intended that the job should be divided up with the Armed Forces to launch a combined counterintelligence offensive.

It is fruitless to speculate on what might have been, but a regrettable side effect of the control exercised by CCRAK is that the Agency did not put its best foot forward in Korea in the last year of the war. Quite frankly, with the exception of a hard core cadre, green and untried case officers were substituted for qualified, experienced officers because the latter were in short supply. By the fall of 1951, CIA Headquarters recognized there were great opportunities if more experienced CIA officers were in Korea. Accordingly, three of the most competent senior clandestine services officers in the Agency were selected: one to be full-time CIA representative and Deputy of CCRAK, another as head of CCRAK's counterintelligence section and doubling as Chief of CIA's counterespionage staff, and the third as Chief of foreign intelligence activities. When it became clear the CCRAK coordination meant that the cease-fire restrictions on tactical activities of the regular forces would also apply to strategic, covert, and clandestine operations, the three

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

officers were reassigned elsewhere.

In 1952 CCRAK began to stifle new operations. Consequently, CIA lost the covert action initiative in Korea to the Communists. The earlier CIA concept of an aggressive clandestine offensive, or at least covert counter-attack to the north, never materialized. By June 1952 the handwriting on the wall clearly pointed a return to a defensive covert and clandestine position.

So ends our memoirs of a limited war which caused more than four million casualties. The armistice talks bogged down over the POW issue. Men continued to die, but it became more a war of words than of guns. Stalemate fighting along the 38th parallel battlefront ended a year later with the Panmunjom cease-fire on 27 July 1953. At great price communism was contained, over twenty million souls remained free, and the world gained time and experience. Is the time well used by the West? What did the experience teach?

~~SECRET~~